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RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: JAGDEO INTERVENTION ENDS AIR TRAFFIC STRIKE

Ref: Georgetown 71

¶1. (U) On February 5, air traffic controllers at Guyana's international airport ended their nearly week-long strike after negotiating a last-minute truce directly with President Jagdeo. Having just returned to Guyana from a trip to Europe, Jagdeo agreed to rescind the letters of dismissal issued the day before by the Minister of Transport and to meet with the strikers in the near future to discuss their salary-related demands, if they returned to the job immediately. The controllers accepted, and the airport's operations promptly normalized.

¶2. (U) During the course of the strike, senior aircraft controllers had worked only during daylight hours, forcing the cancellation or rescheduling of all night flights into and out of Georgetown. Daytime arrivals and departures, which include a Delta flight four mornings a week, had been unaffected. Caribbean Airlines expects to resume a regular schedule February 8.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: In classic Jagdeo administration style, an intractable and festering economic and political squabble saw meaningful progress only after the timely intervention of the President. As he has done in similar business-related disputes, Jagdeo may privately offer modest concessions to the reasonably well-paid air traffic controllers, who will be hard-pressed to reject them and return to the picket lines. Jagdeo excels politically in these situations: ending an immediate crisis while appearing to be personally sensitive and responsive to the demands of an interest group; seeming indispensable after the Cabinet fails to rectify the problem on its own; publicly committing himself and his government to very little, yet also keeping his options wide open. End comment.

Jones